

CLAIM APPENDIX

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1. A method for changing an appearance of a plurality of mechanical reels displayed on a gaming machine, the method comprising:

receiving a wager to play a base wagering game that utilizes the mechanical reels, the base wagering game having a first mathematical model of player odds, the outcomes of the player odds displayable on the mechanical reels;

detecting an indication to play a special feature game that utilizes the mechanical reels, the special feature game having a second mathematical model of player odds, the outcomes of the player odds displayable on the mechanical reels and the second mathematical model being different from the first mathematical model; and

in response to detecting the indication, changing an appearance of the mechanical reels prior to playing the special feature game to provide visual notification to a player that the special feature game is underway rather than the base wagering game and the changed appearance of the mechanical reels being maintained while the special feature game is played.

3. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical reels of claim 1, wherein the special feature game comprises a bonus game.

4. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical reels of claim 1, wherein the special feature game comprises a secondary game requiring an additional wager.

5. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical reels of claim 1, wherein changing the appearance comprises illuminating an illumination source of the gaming machine.

6. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical reels of claim 5, wherein the illumination source is selected from the group consisting of black-light, colored light emitting diodes, white light emitting diodes, organic light emitting diodes, incandescent bulbs, colored film in conjunction with incandescent bulbs and colored film in conjunction with light emitting diodes.

7. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical reels of claim 1, wherein changing the appearance comprises overlaying a video image upon the mechanical reels.

11. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical reels of claim 1, wherein the indication is based on a selection by a player.

12. The method for changing the appearance of the mechanical reels of claim 1, wherein the indication is based on a triggering event occurring during base wagering game play.

13. A method for changing an appearance of a plurality of mechanical reels on a gaming machine, the method comprising:

receiving a wager to play a slot game that utilizes the plurality of mechanical reels, the slot game having a first mathematical model of player odds, the outcomes of the player odds displayable on the mechanical reels;

detecting a first indication to play a bonus game that utilizes the plurality of mechanical reels, the bonus game having a second mathematical model of player odds, the outcomes of the player odds displayable on the mechanical reels and the second mathematical model being different from the first mathematical model;

in response to detecting the first indication, changing a color of the plurality of mechanical spinning reels prior to playing the bonus game and maintaining the changed color of the plurality of mechanical spinning reels during the playing of the bonus game;

detecting a second indication to terminate play of the bonus game; and

in response to detecting the second indication, restoring the color to the plurality of mechanical spinning reels.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein changing the color comprises illuminating an illumination source of the gaming machine.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the illumination source is selected from the group consisting of black-light, colored light emitting diodes, white light emitting diodes, organic light emitting diodes, incandescent bulbs, colored film in conjunction with incandescent bulbs and colored film in conjunction with light emitting diodes.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein restoring the color comprises de-illuminating the illumination source.

17. The method of claim 13, wherein changing the color comprises overlaying a video image upon the plurality of mechanical spinning reels.

18. The method of claim 13, wherein the first and second indication are based on a selection by a player.

19. The method of claim 13, wherein the first indication is based on a triggering event occurring during slot game play.

20. A gaming machine comprising:

a value input device;

a displayed plurality of mechanical reels operable during both a base game having a first mathematical model of player odds, the outcomes of the player odds displayable on the mechanical reels and a special feature game having a second mathematical model of player odds, the outcomes of the player odds displayable on the mechanical reels and the second mathematical model being different from the first mathematical model;

an illumination source adapted to illuminate the displayed mechanical reels; and

a controller operatively coupled to the value input device, the displayed mechanical reels and the illumination source, the controller comprising a processor and a memory coupled to the processor, the controller being programmed to

allow a player to make a wager to play the base game,
detect a first indication to play the special feature game, and
in response to detecting the first indication, illuminate the illumination source to change an appearance of the displayed mechanical reels prior to playing the special feature game to provide visual notification to a player that the special feature game is underway rather than the base game and the changed appearance of the mechanical reels is maintained while the special feature game is played.

21. The gaming machine of claim 20, wherein the controller is further programmed to detect a second indication to terminate the special feature game, and
in response to detecting the second indication, de-illuminate the illumination source to restore the appearance of the displayed mechanical reels.

22. The gaming machine of claim 20, wherein the illumination source is selected from the group consisting of black-light, colored light emitting diodes, white light emitting diodes, organic light emitting diodes, incandescent bulbs, colored film in conjunction with incandescent bulbs and colored film in conjunction with light emitting diodes.

23. The gaming machine of claim 20, wherein the change to the appearance of the displayed mechanical reels comprises a color change to the displayed mechanical reels.

25. The gaming machine of claim 20, wherein the special feature game comprises a bonus game.

26. The gaming machine of claim 20, wherein the special feature game comprises a secondary game requiring an additional wager.

30. A method for changing an appearance of a plurality of mechanical reels displayed on a gaming machine, the method comprising:

receiving a wager to play a base game having a first mathematical model of player odds, the outcomes of the player odds displayable on the mechanical reels;

displaying a base game outcome with the mechanical reels;

detecting an indication to play a special feature game having a second mathematical model of player odds, the outcomes of the player odds displayable on the mechanical reels and the second mathematical model being different from the first mathematical model;

in response to detecting the indication, changing an appearance of the mechanical reels prior to playing the special feature game and maintaining the changed appearance of the mechanical reels while the special feature game is played; and

displaying a special feature game outcome with the mechanical reels.